

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PROPOSED FIRE STATION #2, SUNSET BEACH, BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT
FEMA PROJECT NUMBER EMW-2009-FC-01933**

BACKGROUND

In accordance with 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for FEMA, Subpart B, Agency Implementing Procedures, Part 10.9, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared Pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). The purpose of the proposed project is to improve emergency response times by constructing an additional fire station to service the Town of Sunset Beach in Brunswick County, North Carolina that are compliant with national standards. An EA was prepared to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The Town of Sunset Beach has applied for Assistance to Firefighters Grant program funding under application number EMW-2009-FC-01933. FEMA provides funds under this program for activities that help to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations.

Two project alternatives were explored in depth in the EA for the new fire station construction: 1) No Action and 2) Preferred Action Alternative:

The preferred action alternative in Sunset Beach will result in construction of Sunset Beach Fire Station #2 in an underserved area of the Town of Sunset Beach. The preferred action would provide improved response within the northern and eastern portions of the Town, to which emergency vehicle access is frequently restricted by excessive distances and seasonal high traffic volumes. The preferred action would reduce response time to the expanding commercial businesses and residential subdivisions that have been constructed and/or planned for construction in the coming years between US Highway 17 and the Intra-Coastal Waterway. Both of which will increase population and demand for emergency response. The proposed station will bolster the existing fire station capability that currently has response times in excess of seven minutes to the northern and eastern portions of the town. Emergency response times will be drastically reduced following construction of this 7,297 sq. ft. station complete with two pull-through bays and ample space for 24 hr. occupancy by a crew of four firefighters. The No Action alternative would result in no construction of a new fire station in this location. The one existing fire station cannot decrease response times on its own and increasing development pressure would increase response demand and traffic loads. Response times are expected to further increase with the predicted population growth and associated increased call-volume. The no action alternative results in a lower level of overall public safety than the preferred action alternative.

A public notice was posted in Brunswick Beacon on November 17, 2010 and the draft EA was available for review for a period of 15 days at the Town of Sunset Beach Town Hall. The draft EA was also available online at the <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm> website. The public was invited to comment on the proposed action and the draft EA. No comments were received from the public during the 15 day comment period.

FINDINGS

The preferred action as described in the EA will not adversely impact geology, groundwater, floodplains, wetlands, environmental justice, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, hazardous materials, or socioeconomic resources. During the construction period, short-term impacts to soil, downstream surface water, traffic, air quality, and noise are anticipated. All short-term impacts require utilizing best management practices to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

CONDITIONS

Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other Laws and Executive Orders.

In accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations, the applicant is responsible for acquiring any necessary permits prior to commencing construction at the preferred project site. All permit conditions and/or Best Management Practices must be followed.

If ground disturbing activities occur during construction, applicant will monitor ground disturbance and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the State and FEMA.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the EA, coordination with the appropriate agencies, comments from the public, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a major Federal action that will not significantly adversely affect the quality of the natural and human environment, nor does it have the potential for significant adverse cumulative effects. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.9) and the preferred actions as described in the attached EA may proceed.

APPROVAL



William R. Straw, Ph.D.
Regional Environmental Officer

Date 12/16/10